



Sir Real's

**UNDERGROUND
COMIX CLASSIX**

Cascade Comix Monthly #2

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Not an underground comix, but listed here because its articles and illustrations all pertain to underground comix.

Larry S. Todd interview.

CASCADE

COMIX MONTHLY

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CASCADE

COMIX MONTHLY

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EVERYMAN COMICS #1 is a free tabloid available from Everyman Studios. "Yarrg From The Planet Gloop" by Anderson, Peterson and Romero, and "The Space Patrol" by Kirk Kennedy are featured in this issue. The back page has a listing of other comix available from Everyman. Send 25¢ for postage (first class) to: Everyman Studios, 432 S. Cascade, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

LARRY TODD SPEAKS



Larry Todd was interviewed in his Oakland home/studio on February 18. Before I turned on the tape recorder, Larry announced that he planned to give up doing comix on a pro basis. I tried to pursue that topic during the first part of the interview.

Larry asked the first question, then answered it....

TODD: Mr. Todd, why have you failed to overtake the well-known position of Mr. Crumb in the underground? Answer: Because I don't play the banjo.

Continuing with the rap about the flying saucer books, in number seven I intend to go into, in addition to these flying saucer people who watch the television all the time, details of why they're after Atlantis which has all the crystal records of how to make all the things that they can no longer produce.

CASCADE: Yes, well tell me, how are you going to do this after you quit doing comix?

TODD: I'm not going to quit doing comix; I intend to keep right on drawing the comix at my own damn pace.

CASCADE: So what are you giving up?

TODD: I'm giving up trying to get into all the neat new markets that seem to be opening for underground cartoonists, like *High Times* and *Playboy*, and the various other markets that have all of a sudden said, "sure, send us your stuff, we'll pay dah dah dah dah dah, and give your originals back, too." To hell with them. To hell with any market that I have to submit to. I don't have to submit to Ron Turner—he'll take what I give him and be happy with it. That's always the way it's been with him, and that's good. I hope it is the same with Bachner.

CASCADE: Do you want to talk about the *Ellison* book? How did that get started? He just gave you this, you didn't solicit it from him at all?

TODD: Well, he said, "I want this," (pointing to an old painting by L.T.) and I said, "sure, Harlan," and I gave it to him. "You gotta write me something for it." And Harlan said, "sure." And then that happened. He left it out in a room which was being renovated, and the rain fell on it, and it went wrinkle, wrinkle, wrinkle, and I had to try and restore it. Harlan was very peni-



ALL QUESTIONS; NO ANSWERS

tent, and did me a whole book, which I got paid for a million years ago by Ron Turner, and now I have to do it.

CASCADE: This is a big book, right?

TODD: That's what they told me. Harlan tells me that.

CASCADE: How many stories?

TODD: 26. Alphabet.

CASCADE: Well, that's nothing for a man who did all those hundreds of pages of comics as a youth.

TODD: So they say. I'm an old man now.

CASCADE: You make it look easy.

TODD: It is easy--it's just tedious. I just have to get a comfortable little estate in the country where I can sit back on my ass and draw these things without having to worry about commercial considerations with respect to them.

CASCADE: So you haven't really given up on the idea of comix?

TODD: No, I've just given up on the idea of making it a profession. It's a hobby. It was a hobby when I enjoyed it most; it should be a hobby now. And it should be a hobby among my other hobbies, too, which have gone sadly neglected while I tried to make comix a business.

CASCADE: Just doing it as a hobby is not a stigma on your art at all, not these days.

TODD: No, in fact it's a purification, because it removes the need for commercial considerations. It removes the need for any posterity thoughts. "Oh, what is Jim Steranko and his little battery of chimpanzees going to say about me in *Mediascene*, etc., etc., etc." Ashamed as I am of it, I still

think about that. "Oh, why hasn't he mentioned me, aren't I a figure on the scene?" Well, the fact is I'm still underground. No one's interested in something that's still underground, and in a way it's a protection. I have steady sales; I know if I come back in ten years Ron Turner will have a very healthy check for me, but if I try and collect it every year it's going to be a pittance.

So, Prototyping it is. After all, isn't that what Dr. Atomic was involved with in the first place, anyway, was making shit? And besides, in high school I always used to do all kinds of odd machining and making odd things, but I have not done that over the past ten years, and I feel real lonely for it, because it activated a lot of the stuff that I did paint and draw. And it really feeds into the Dr. Atomic image, and so I ought to make some more stuff, I feel. That's where this idiot contraption came from. (Pointing at Protopipe)

CASCADE: Are you from California?

TODD: No. I am from New York and Chicago, having spent most of my life in--not New York City--Buffalo and Chicago, and Syracuse, New York, where I spent college years.

CASCADE: And knew Vaughn Bode.

TODD: Yes, so the story goes.

CASCADE: What was the situation when you stayed in New York City with Wrightson and Kaluta?

TODD: Kaluta, Wrightson and Jones lived in the same building. I think Wrightson had the apartment, Kaluta lived in the back room. That was the crash pad. Jones lived with Weiss downstairs in the

fancy pad on the sixth floor. I remember coming down there several times, in fact it's a very moody and atmospheric time of my life, and one that I like to linger on in memory, the time spent flirting around New York City. There was very distinct music being played on the radio; whenever I hear that music now, bang! It throws me right back. I'm an old man now, don't bother me! Can't you see I'm alone with my memories?!

Kaluta had a cat named Lafitte which had six claws. Every morning was overcast. I managed to stay awake till two o'clock every morning drawing pictures, and painting pictures, went to sleep and would manage to get up around the time the sun got up, and would then go around and insult my fair share of publishers that day... "What, you call this art?" I still managed to make a pretty fair impression on Jim Warren, because I was somehow plugged into the Vaughn Bode circuit, and Jim Warren was very tightly working on the Vaughn Bode circuit. After I lost Vaughn Bode energy I was no longer interesting to Jim Warren. The Skywald thing I did on my own energy alone, I'm proud to say.

After about six months living in New York in the last good building in town, I could take it no more and went back up to Syracuse, made a little bit of money and came out to the West Coast, also interestingly on the same flight with Vaughn, a big 747. We flew out to San Francisco and crashed with Vaughn's brother, Vinnie, and crashed with the Air Pirates, and that's where I wound up, as an ersatz Air Pirate who never really got an opportunity to do any Air Pirating.

CASCADE: You were in the first tabloid, at least.

TODD: Yeah, that's true; I got that far. That came together after the Air Pirate building broke up. We had this building at Fourth and Harrison, in the old earthquake jelly zone where whenever there's an earthquake the ground quivers like jello because it's all fill,

"We flew out to San Francisco and crashed with Vaughn's brother, Vinnie, and crashed with the Air Pirates, and that's where I wound up, as an ersatz Air Pirate...."

built on the ruins of old ships in the old boneyard...compressed old ships with gravel dumped in between, and cement and blacktop put on top of it. Dan O'Neill described one time when he saw an earthquake there. He said there were big ground waves rolling through the ground, and you could see them deform the whole street, and it was like jello. It made a whole bunch of cracks that he did show me in the building.

So on Amchitka day, the day they blew the nuclear blast off at Amchitka, we were all expecting California to crack off and fall into the ocean. We were all sitting there listening to the countdown, waiting for the earthquake crack of doom. In the fucking Fourth and Harrison building, all of the Air Pirates, Ted Richards, Gary Hallgren, Shary, Bobby, Dan O'Neill and a couple of other people who were with us at the time, maybe even Willy Murphy, 'cause Murphy was an ersatz Air Pirate, too.

Memories, Memories. Sometimes I really get reveries. God, if I could only be back in some of those times now. What a drag it is, what it became; what a wonderful thing it was. Now I can only talk about it and remember it. Isn't there even any good drug? Sigh. As they say, I was so poor then, but I was so rich.

I spent about three or four months there, before the Air Pirate building broke up, and then Ted Richards and his brother and sister-in-law and myself and a few other people moved into a building up on Seventeenth Street, right near the Castro Street area, and that has its own separate atmosphere to it in my memory.

CASCADE: Why do you have this now? (Pointing at the painting mentioned earlier)

TODD: I have that now because I was supposed to restore it, which I did to the best of my ability, and now I have to make another one of these little plastic frames around it so it can be shot for the back cover of the comic book. It's letter N.

CASCADE: Have you figured out how you can put lights on this so you won't see the wrinkles?

TODD: I swear I don't worry about it. I swear to hell with it! Really. It ain't art.

CASCADE: It ain't?

TODD: It is not!

CASCADE: You mean this isn't the greatest thing since sliced bread?

TODD: No. It isn't even the greatest thing since twelve ways to build you body. It's just a fucking funny book.

CASCADE: Yep, it's only worth twenty minutes of your time, at the most.

TODD: No, it'll take an hour, because it's pretty dense. It's six thousand words, and I put a lot of eyeball kicks into it. I couldn't do real funny book stuff except in one sequence, so I had to be stuck with a whole bunch of vignette images, and I just complicated them needlessly.

Someday, because I have sort of a proprietary feeling toward the magazine now that nobody's left there that I recognize except the publisher, I'm going to submit a whole bunch of science fiction illios to *Galaxy* and say, "Hey, why don't you send me some stuff to illustrate again. I don't care about the money, bullshit on that." I just have a proprietary interest in the magazine, because they really were the first ones to give me professional recognition, and it's hit sad times of late. I don't know what Steve Fabian's doing now that he's become Art Director, 'cause the art that's been in there has been awful.

The conversation rambled on through such topics as wind power, solar power, flywheels, and more. Larry always likes to talk about such heavy subjects as these, and many other technological innovations. "What do you get when you have a flywheel spinning at the speed of light? A time machine, I think," said Larry. The guy is way ahead of his time.

On Collecting Comix

by BRUCE SWEENEY

Comix collecting has gotta be one of the more esoteric hobbies around. I recently saw the 1st edition *Monster Magazine Price Guide* advertised in *The Buyer's Guide for Comics Fandom*; fortunately we have yet to be encumbered with an underground comix price guide. No collector that I know wants one, either. The longer we function without one, the longer we collectors will be able to score important titles without some pre-set cut-throat price.

I recently paid a quiet dollar apiece for some out-of-print u.g.'s to a comic dealer who generally takes all customers for their drawers as a matter of course. Let's not give this kind of dealer a helping hand, gang. Collecting without a price guide leaves the market place more open to discussion of relative merits, rather than to cash value and finally art impacts value almost as much as economics does. The less that straight dealers know, the better for those of us who collect.

It's amazing how diversified the collectors have already become

and how knowledge is so carefully guarded. Many collectors are turned on by the 1st edition mentality. (I want a *MOM'S HOMEMADE* with a 49¢ instead of a 50¢ cover price!) Others, like Sandy Cutler, are into the aspect of getting the privately published titles like *GHOST MOTHER*, *DIE GRETCHEN*, or *TASTY 1*; another friend of mine, Mark Von Arx, has a formidable u.g. tabloid collection; Jerry Weist collects original art and misprinted covers, another swears by the 7¢ers and still others like myself dabble in the English and Dutch u.g.'s.

There is real difficulty in collecting comix for those of us who are non-Californians. That's where the real action is, and trying to flush out a Plymell ZAP outside of California is sheer murder compared to the accessibility on the West Coast. Many important titles originated in the East (*GOTHIC BLIMP WORKS*, *TASTY*, *GREASER*, *NEW PALTZ*, *NEW LEGENDS*, *WHOLE WHEAT*, *GHOST MOTHER*, etc.), but the bulk of comix came out of the larger publishers. With the exception of Krupp in Princeton, Wis., almost all the publishers are in California and tracking down old u.g.'s can mean a lot of letter-writing, a big phone bill and a lot of help from other collectors. Super-ug-sleuth Jay Kennedy recently plucked an overlap *BIJOU* out of the back of a bookstore bin. Let that serve the rest of us as inspiration.

Biskits



J. MICHAEL LEONARD

© '70 J. MICHAEL



BOB ARMSTRONG

LARRY RIPPEE

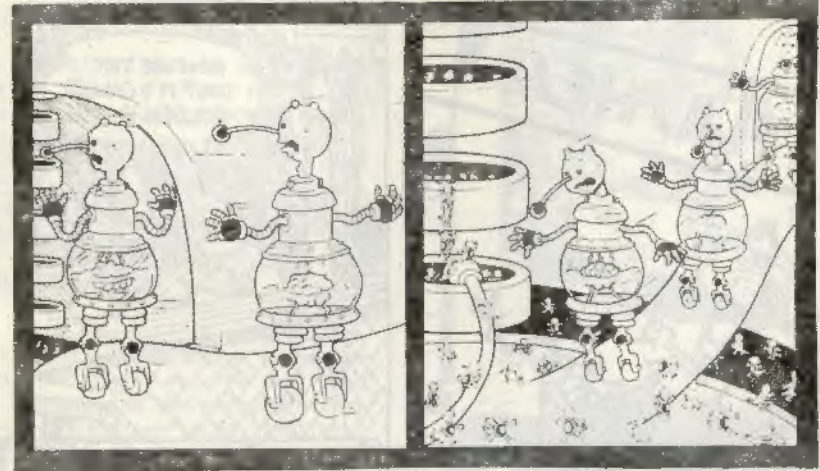


There's a completely different kind of comic book brewing at Krupp. It's a surrealist spin-off of SNARF called MONDO SNARFO, and it's nearing completion. Contributors include Bob Armstrong, Robert Crumb, Kim Deitch, Art Spiegelman, Dutch artist Peter Pontiac, Larry Rippee, Steve Stiles, Joel Beck, and Denis Kitchen. A few panels from the book are reproduced herewith.

"Each artist did a piece in a stream-of-consciousness approach, or by abandoning customary storytelling methods," said the editor, Denis Kitchen. "Much is pure experimental graphics, still with panels, and sometimes with word balloons, but unlike an ordinary comic. And because of that, I expect a more limited audience."

Kitchen is not optimistic about the book's chances of going into a second printing, saying "I'd be surprised if the book sold briskly, despite the strong line-up. I hope I'm wrong on that account, but I know what sells...."

MONDO SNARFO



KIM DEITCH

Tentatively scheduled for early May publication, MONDO SNARFO will have a cover price of \$1. This ground-breaking book may also be available in a special limited

edition, quality paper format, at a higher price.

Be on the lookout for this one, folks; it's gonna be something special!



DENIS KITCHEN

FLASHES!!



RIP OFF COMIX #3 is out. A big bash was held at the Rip Off warehouse in San Francisco the evening of March 28 to celebrate the new book's publication. The 48-pager opens with a new (short) Freak Brothers story by Shelton, there's a nice Dealer McDope story by Dave Sheridan in which McDope visits Hawaii, a story by R. Diggs, Lunch-
 eonCounters of the Worst Kind by Larry Rippee, Stupid Stories by Fred Schrier, and lots of Rip Off Syndicate pages by Ted Richards, Bill Griffith, et al.

"RIP OFF COMIX #1 and #2 have sold a combined 50,000 copies since we published 'em last year," Fred Todd, Rip Off Press President, said. "And they're still going strong."

The cover, featuring Wonder Warthog, was done by Shelton using the European technique of coloring (a full color overlay, color separated without the black lines). The back cover is the third in his series of enlightened views of the Rip Off Press publishing empire. This book is highly recommended, and can be ordered from Rip Off for \$1.05 postpaid.

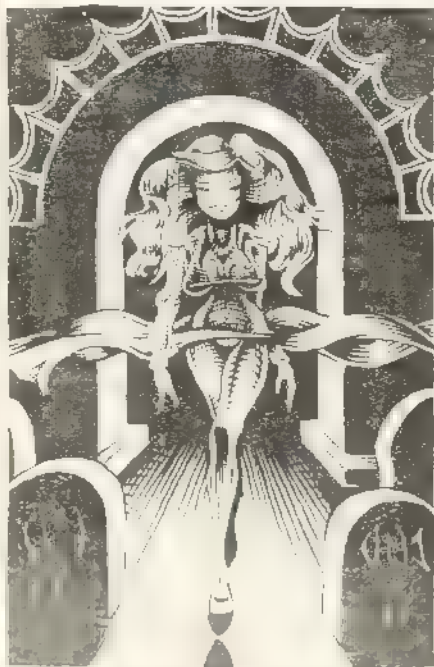


FLASHES, cont'd

CORPORATE CRIME #2 is in the works. Leonard Rifas, editor, is moving to Princeton soon to work with Denis Kitchen on this and other projects. Many of the same artists will be in #2, plus Spain Rodriguez and longer stories by Jay Kinney and Kitchen. The latter is a story on Krupp's use of slave labor in WWII.

Peter Poplaski is wrapping up DEATH RATTLE #4 after a three year delay. It will soon be published by Krupp, with the three previous issues being reprinted simultaneously.

DR. WIRTHAM'S COMIX & STORIES #3 has just been printed. This beautifully produced book has a cover by Greg Irons, and E.C. type bizarro stories by Oisif Equax, Mike Roberts, Rich Larson and Mark Burbey. There's also some neat stuff by Larry Rippee and Al Davoren. Good art abounds in this ish; the Irons cover is super!



Shown here are some of Equax's panels from DR. WIRTHAM'S #3. It can be ordered from Clifford Neal, 378 Judson Ave., Mystic, CT 06355 for \$1.25 postpaid.

DOPE COMIX #1 is now available from Krupp for \$1. This one has a Cabarga cover and some work by Dan Steffan.

WEIRD TRIPS #2 features a Bill Stout cover, a definitive story of 1957 cannibal/murderer Ed Gein, interview with Robert Shea ■ Robert Anton Wilson (ILLUMINATUS) and other stuff. Basically a magazine as #1, but now it's all true, not half and half as before. Available from Krupp for \$1.

NARD 'n PAT will be reprinted by Krupp this month. This comix, which was originally pubbed by Cartoonist's Coop Press, will be slightly revised for this edition, and better paper stock will be used.

JERRY THE POLAR BEAR #1 has just been published by Greg Spagnola, featuring Funny animal comics by George Erling, Doug Hansen, Reed Waller, and Greg. Order from The Polar Bear Print Plant, 1225 Bois-sevain Ave., Norfolk, VA 23507 for \$1.

quick ones

BY BILL SHERMAN

THE SPIRIT #17 (Krupp, \$1.50)

Continuing the numbering from Warren—which pubbed the first sixteen reprint maga—Krupp manages to surpass its predecessor in packaging. Luvverly white paper. More reprints for yer money. A slight but amusin' comic "jam" interview between Will Eisner and publisher Denis Kitchen. Plus an irreplacably flaky four-page "Lady Luck" tale by Eisner colleague Claus Nordling. Some neat additions.

But the main point of ordering is Eisner's title character, one of the wittiest comic crimefighters in the history of the genre. Eisner is doggedly tongue-in-cheek, often to the point of archness (as in this ish's opener machine gun primer story—which first saw reprint light in Harvey Comics' Spirit book,) but his sense of visual/textural complement is unsurpassed. Plus he does the genre some marvelous turns—as when our hero the Spirit learns that crime-fighting is putting him \$20,000 in the hole and he's forced to hire himself out to make up the deficit.

And there're the secondary characters, another of Eisner's puling points. While Spirit flame Ellen Dolan may be stereotypically middle-class to the point of tedium, characters like the precociously snotty filthy richkid Darling O'Shea, the ludicrously grim Carrion and the stolidly unimaginative Dolan add to the richness. (I may be branded a heretic here, but after seventeen reprints and a huncha other glimpses, I still can't tell Eisner's vamp villainesses apart.

If this book has one major flaw, it's in maintaining Warren's ragged chronology with its leaps of weeks and months between reprints. The Spirit tales, while separate unto

themselves, often linked together sequentially, and it's frustrating not having that continuity maintained. Still, the Spirit is a significant part of comics history (and much more interesting than the bulk of Golden Age dross you see reprinted,) and it's good news having him back.

QUACK! #6 (Star Reach, \$1.25)

A Prof. Quack sequel (sans the charismatic E.Z. Wolf in his hard-boil role, but with a lotta horror flick cliches instead) by Ted Richards and the second part of Steve Leialoha's 3-piece Western rabbit tale mark this ish's highlights. For the rest, both Lee Marrs and Michael Gilbert (Christmas Carols?!? JEEsus!) pull in uncharacteristically weak items while Scott Shaw pulls out the book entirely, forcing publisher Friedrich to put in a Brunner reprint from Quack! #1 in the stead of Shaw's You-all Gibbon piece. (Shades of Marvel Comics!) In other words, Mike Friedrich still



art spiegelman

hasn't found a way of pushing *Quack!* up to the consistent level of his other zine *Star Reach*.

Maybe we shouldn't worry about that, tho: some kinds of consistency can be rather stultifying. And even a too-easy satire like Marrs' "Fleet Foot Foogie" has its moments (too bad Marrs didn't know how to end her story.) *Quack!* ain't as sharp as *ish* four--or premiere one--but it's still worth a read.

But then I'm a sucker for comic animals.

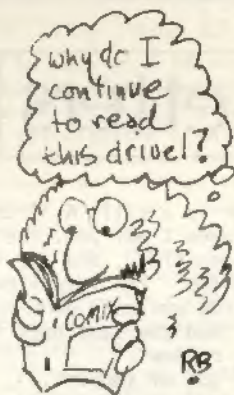
STAR REACH #11 (Star Reach, \$1.25)

If nothin' else this *ish* of *Reach* is worthwhile for its cover pic of a nun mashing the guts out of an alien with the base of her fist:ix: beats anything *Heavy Metal* has come up with, that's for sure. (And the rendering is so *WANI!*)

Star Reach may run the risk of taking itself too seriously at times, but for a zine with its regularity it's rather amazing to note what editor/publisher Friedrich has done with it. Good sf prose, God knows, is hard enuff to come by regularly: really good sf comix are as easy to find as moral norms in a S. Clay Wilson strip...

Star Reach has 'em, tho (good sf comix, I mean: altho the moral quota is rather high too, my slanted cover description notwithstanding.) And if some of the book's writer/artists mistake allegory for storytelling, the ART's always slick 'n inventive. Gray Lida's "In One Era and Out the Other," for instance, looks like it could go either way textwise--it's part of a four-part tale--but the art has an intriguing softness to it.

And Motter/Steacy's "The Sacred and the Profane" (source of the cover image) very quickly has shaped into a most interesting comic serial: subtle character delineation used for effective thematic argument and some impressively shaped and shaded sequences



add to this tale of Christianity in space. Motter/Steacy show a regard for comic montage that's both spectacular and thematically gratifying. Supremely intelligent storytelling.

By comparison Lee Marrs' series of a hunted mindwarper pales a bit, partly due to some unsubtle dialog in the beginning and flashes of unease in the art. But the series shows promise. Gene Day's "Samurai" on the other hand by Friedrich's own admission calls to mind a similar tale from a previous *Star Reach* (and one in an early *Marvel* kung-fu black-and-white, too) and loses points for it. Who wants *Samurais* in a mag called *Star Reach*, anyway?

YOW COMICS (Last Gasp, \$1.25)

In which Bill Griffith's Zippy the Pinhead moves into a larger format and meets Ernie Bilko. (The kid's really comin' up in the world!) Where *Zippy Stories* possessed a nodular edge, apparently due to the cartoonist's unfamiliarity with the nuances of weekly stripping (it was still a GREAT comic!) this latest Griffith effort moves more smoothly. Full-plotted (if still fulla non-sequitar) stories and a more unrestrained sense of page composition mark this issue--along with a return to strict black-and-white format.

cont'd on page 15

Letters

Cascade is a hit! As I think I told you when I met you, the color work is beautiful...and the inside is great, too. The interview with Ted Richards was well done and valuable, and the same goes for the comix reviews.

You've got my support.

JAY KINNEY
SAN FRANCISCO

Thanks heaps for the first issue of CCM. It is very nicely put together and the color covers were excellent. I think if you are trying to put together some competition for Clay Geerdes' publication, that you've already got him beat. Of course he has a lot of connections and such, but your zine is so nice looking, whereas his has always been a rag.

For me the most interesting item in the issue was your interview with Ted Richards. I respect Richards a lot for his honesty and ability to view his own career objectively. I would have to agree that at the time of the Air Pirates he seemed the least matured of the artists in the group. But since then he has come a long way and achieved a solidarity of style that works exceptionally well for him. I thot his strip about Willy Murphy in the Two Fools book was a real high point for him. It was so well thot out and written with enough compassion and (I would guess) love for Murphy that it totally blew me away.

What really hit me about the interview was his opinions towards doing syndicated comic strips. For a long time I felt exactly as he described. I figured that altho I was a heavy student of the history of my craft, it didn't seem worth it to consider actually going through all the bullshit necessary to work up a presentation for the



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syndicates. But after reading what Richards had to say I have changed my mind. He is right when he says it is time for cartoonists to get off their collective butts and attack the syndicates. They have to be made aware that the audience has changed drastically in the last 10-15 years and the ideas that the dull masses don't know what is funny are as antiquated as the executives at the syndicates who keep ghosts like Nancy alive, and buy new strips like the recent Cathy.

So I must thank Richards for making me realize that maybe it is worth it to revive my thots on doing a syndicated strip. I really feel like the work involved might be worth it, even if my ideas don't sell.

DAN STEFFAN
FALLS CHURCH, VA.

Thanks for the sample copy of CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY. It's a nice little zine. Interesting stuff. I liked the Richards interview, the Sherman reviews ("smarmy"?), and the fact that you're able to get color (I'm not familiar with the technique).

DENIS KITCHEN
PRINCETON, WIS.

I must congratulate you on this fine magazine. The format you've chosen for CCM is excellent, both in concept and execution. And zee color work is wowow!! Artie, do you own your own little litho press or something?

The news you had on the underground field WAS news to me, unlike so many other zines that give me "news flashes" I've read in 34 other publications that month.

RICHARD BRUNING
MADISON, WIS.

cont'd from page 13

Best in this book is Zippy's Impersonation of Sir Kenneth Clark in "Time Out of Mind," a surreal tour of civilization from within the New York Museum of Natural History with our pinhead as guide. (Throw away your schoolbooks, kids, and read this book twenty times over!!) A close runner is our microcephalic hero's adventure in political corruption, which Griffith turns into an enjoyably satiric slapstick faray.

Griffy's humor, as he himself notes, "treads a fine line between fun and non-fun." (How long can you--should you--keep laughing at pinheads without feeling an occasional twinge, anyway?) But that only increases the reader's involvement. Some readers I know hate Griffith's unpretty art because his people are lumpy like life rather than traditional comics. There are other comix for them. Me, I find Griffith's artistic persona occasionally arrogant but always stimulating. This book is his best yet.



